

Volunteer Management 101

Top Ten Tips for Recruiting and Retention and Building a Volunteer Program From the Ground Up

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Tip # 1 Have a Plan

Why volunteers?

To extend your resources and complete tasks or jobs that staff don't want or can't do

- ✓ **Direct assistance**
Mentoring, counseling, providing information
- ✓ **Office Administrative Help**
Answering phones, filing, data entry, copying, etc.
- ✓ **Direct Staff Assistance**
Clerical projects, research, special events, etc.
- ✓ **Outreach**
Speaker's bureau, outreach events, fundraising activities

Organizing The Process

The cycle of volunteer management

- ✓ Planning/Preparing
- ✓ Recruiting/Screening
- ✓ Training/Orientation
- ✓ Evaluating
- ✓ Recognizing

Volunteer Planning Checklist

✓ What will they do?

Do you have: space for the work, materials needed, training prepared, structure and supervision, desk, telephone, computer?

✓ What can they do

Are there tasks that volunteer can't or shouldn't do

Know the job you are asking a volunteer to do

What are the legal implications?

✓ What tasks, events, etc. need to be accomplished?

Provide timelines and structure

Make sure volunteers know what is expected of them

Good Job Descriptions Make Your Job Easier

- ✓ Job Descriptions are one of the most important pieces in developing a successful volunteer program.
Job descriptions help:
Target Recruitment
Managers and volunteers make good matches
Volunteers know what is expected of them
Need help developing them?
Use online resources – Templates are available.

Tip # 2 Recruit Widely

Use all the resources that are available:

- ✓ Online Volunteer Centers
- ✓ Social Networking
- ✓ Press Releases/PSA's
- ✓ Business and Community Groups
- ✓ Brochure Distribution
- ✓ Service Learning/Students
- ✓ Community Events
- ✓ Organization Website

Social Networking and Blogs

Necessary evil or powerful tools?

Look before you leap

Get help if you need it

Consider the “dark” side

Facebook

Blogs – Wordpress, Blogger

Twitter

#Voluntweet

Online Volunteer Centers

✓ United Way Volunteer Center

Treasure Valley

<http://www.unitedwaytv.org/>

ID-WA

<http://waidvolunteercenter.org/vc/>

✓ Volunteer Match

<http://www.volunteermatch.org/>

WEB TIP: Keep your volunteer jobs up “front” by editing or updating them often – Most websites feature recently added or updated listings on their home page

Tip # 2 Recruit Widely

46% of volunteers are recruited by word of mouth

✓ Ask your volunteers to tell their stories and ask their friends to be volunteers

Connecting With Local Media

✓ Collect Local Media Contacts

Use websites, online and print publications to find email addresses for editors, reporters and special columns

Look for local family and special interest publications that are a good fit for your

✓ Prepare Press Releases and Public Service Announcements (PSA)

✓ Use Stories and Pictures

Be Persistent!

Tip #3 Be Ready For Your Volunteers

✓ Many potential volunteers are lost before they begin because the organization is not able to put them to work soon enough

✓ Don't recruit volunteers until you have completed planning and you are ready to screen, train, place, supervise and evaluate them

Tip #3 Be Ready For Your Volunteers

When potential volunteers call, email or snail mail you be ready to respond right away:

✓ Who's going to answer phone calls?

▪ Have a phone script and form ready to collect information

✓ What about emails?

▪ Have draft emails ready to make it easier to respond to email inquiries

▪ Make sure you have applications, releases, agreements and waivers, training materials and are able to give your new recruit an idea when they may be able to start

Tip #4

Be honest about the volunteer job

- ✓ Don't understate the commitment and time that your volunteer positions require
- ✓ Don't soft sell the difficulties or downsides that are part of a volunteer position
- ✓ Use the volunteer job description to explore whether the applicant is a good match for the position

Tip #4

Be honest about the volunteer job

- ✓ Ask yourself (or the person who will supervise):
 - Could I do this job?
 - Would I be willing to do this job?
 - What would I hate, what might upset me or make me never want to come back?
- ✓ Can't answer those questions?
 - The person who will be responsible for the volunteer should do this job before you ask someone else to take it on.

Tip # 5

Have a Tracking System Ready

Have a system in place before you start recruiting volunteers.

Determine your needs:

- ✓ How many volunteers do you plan to have?
- ✓ How many different volunteer jobs or projects will your organization have?
- ✓ How will volunteer hours be tracked?
- ✓ How will you be communicating with your volunteers?

Tip # 5

Have a Tracking System Ready

Managing volunteers also means managing their information

- ✓ Contact details
- ✓ Skills
- ✓ Preferences
- ✓ Availability
- ✓ Assignments
- ✓ Generate email, letters, lists
- ✓ Track volunteer hours
 - An Excel spreadsheet or digital Contact list won't do

Tip # 6

Provide Training and Supervision

Volunteers take time before they ever “make” time...

If they ever “make” more time at all.

Tip # 6

Provide Training and Supervision

- ✓ Volunteers who drop out quickly probably did not get the training and supervision/support they needed to feel successful in their assignments
- ✓ Make sure you have the support of staff who will be supervising volunteers
- ✓ Train staff and lead volunteers to be good supervisors and managers for your new volunteers

Tip # 7 **Communicate, Communicate, Communicate!**

- ✓ Communication is one of the most important elements in any setting
- ✓ Maintaining communication with your volunteers is essential for supervision and success
- ✓ Ask your volunteers how to best communicate with them

Tip # 7 **Communicate, Communicate, Communicate!**

There are many ways to communicate with your volunteers

- ✓ Learn which method is effective
- ✓ Develop groups
- ✓ Exploit technology
- ✓ Be ready to learn new technologies and change your attitude
- ✓ Demographic preferences and the composition of your volunteer pool must guide your path

Tip # 7 **Communicate, Communicate, Communicate!**

- ✓ Have a regular way of communicating with your volunteers
- ✓ Is email obsolete?
- ✓ E-mail blasts, like letters, can be personalized
- ✓ Feedback is controlled
- ✓ Use a professional tool like Constant Contact or Mail Chimp
- ✓ Link/post email blasts to your Facebook or Blog

Tip # 8 **Make Time for One-on-One**

- ✓ Delegate if this is impossible for you to do yourself
- ✓ One-on-one time is a worthwhile investment before you place a volunteer
- ✓ Sharing your time with a volunteer one-on-one is a form of recognition and a way to personally say "Thank You"
- ✓ One-on-one will help you understand what's working and where adjustments should be made

Tip # 8 **Make Time for One-on-One**

One on one time can also be:

- ✓ With their supervisor or manager
- ✓ With another trusted volunteer
- ✓ Telephone calls
- ✓ Making the rounds at a celebration

Tip # 9 **Don't Forget to Evaluate and Give Feedback**

Evaluation

- ✓ Everyone (volunteers not just staff) are entitled to regular evaluations

Evaluations can provide:

- ✓ Goals or course corrections that will help you retain your volunteers
- ✓ Valuable feedback about how well your programs are working
- ✓ Helps your volunteers avoid burnout

Tip #9

Evaluation and Feedback

Understand the Basic Motivators

- ✓Praise
- ✓Accomplishment
- ✓Affiliation
- ✓Influence
-all of these motivators are part of the evaluation process

Tip # 10

Say Thank You Often and In Different Ways

- ✓Recognition is an important step in retaining a quality volunteer.
- ✓Knowing a volunteer's motivator will help in planning a meaningful recognition.

Tip # 10

Say Thank You Often and In Different Ways

A once a year Volunteer Recognition event is nice - but it is not enough and you can do better:

- ✓Periodic email and print newsletters should always include Thank You's and Stories of Service
- ✓Postcards and holiday cards are easy and worth much more than it costs to generate them

Tip # 10

Say Thank You Often and In Different Ways

- ✓Consider quarterly gatherings/trainings - your invitation is another way of saying thank you even if your volunteers can't attend
 - ✓Use incentive and small "rewards" with care
- Remember that most volunteers take on this role because the work done and the contributions they make are their rewards**

Tip # 10

Say Thank You Often and In Different Ways

Three powerful words that can help you say THANK YOU...

The Dollar Store!

It really is the thought that counts!
So make sure your volunteers know how much they mean to your organization!

Useful Links

Basic Resources

- ✓ <http://www.idealists.org/info/Volunteer>
- ✓ <http://www.volunteeralive.org/>
- ✓ <http://www.energizeinc.com/art.html>
- ✓ <http://www.pfts.com.au/>

Job Descriptions

- ✓ <http://www.idcis.intocareers.org/>
- ✓ <http://www.techsoup.org/learningcenter/volunteers>

Useful Links

Volunteer Management Software

- ✓ <http://www.myvolunteer.com/>
- ✓ <http://www.Volunteer2.com/>
- ✓ <http://www.volgistics.com/>
- ✓ <http://www.samaritan.com/>
- ✓ <http://www.missionresearch.com/index.html>

Useful Links

Communication Tools

- ✓ <http://www.constantcontact.com/index.jsp>
- ✓ <http://www.mailchimp.com/>
- ✓ <http://blogs.volunteermatch.org/engagingvolunteers/voluntweet/>